

**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ for growth of a nitride semiconductor layer on a sapphire substrate comprising:

an Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> layer provided on the sapphire substrate; and

a second layer including N, O and Al as ~~separately~~ provided on the Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> layer, sapphire substrate, and

wherein the second layer contacts with the ~~sapphire substrate~~ Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> layer at a first surface thereof of the second layer and is formed such that a proportion of N to a composition ratio of N, O and Al in the first surface is smaller than that of N to the composition ratio of N, O and Al in a second surface of the second layer contacting with a nitride semiconductor layer and that a proportion of O to the composition ratio in the first surface is larger than that of O to the composition ratio in the second surface.

6. (Currently Amended) The substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ according to claim 5, wherein a cap layer made of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> is provided as the uppermost layer of the substrate for growth of nitride semiconductor.

7. (Currently Amended) A substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ for growth of a nitride semiconductor layer on a sapphire substrate comprising:

an Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> layer ~~as separately~~ provided on the sapphire substrate; and

either one layer of an AlON layer or an AlN layer provided on said Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> layer.

8. (Currently Amended) The substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ according to claim 7, wherein a cap layer made of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  is provided as the uppermost layer of the substrate for growth of nitride semiconductor.

9. (Currently Amended) A substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ for growth of a nitride semiconductor layer on a sapphire substrate comprising:

an  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  layer as separately provided on the sapphire substrate;

an AlON layer which is a first layer;

an AlN layer which is a second layer; and

a structure in which the first layer and the second layer are deposited on the  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  layer in this order.

10. (Currently Amended) The substrate ~~for growth of nitride semiconductor~~ according to claim 9, wherein a cap layer made of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  is provided as the uppermost layer of the substrate for growth of nitride semiconductor.

11. (New) A substrate for growth of a nitride semiconductor layer on a sapphire substrate comprising:

a first layer comprised of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ , the first layer being disposed against the sapphire substrate at a first surface; and

a second layer including N, O and Al, the second layer being disposed on the first layer, the second layer being configured to be disposed against a nitride semiconductor layer at a second surface,

wherein a proportion of N to a composition ratio of N, O and Al in the first surface is smaller than a proportion of N to the composition ratio of N, O and Al in the second surface and a proportion of O to the composition ratio of N, O and Al in the first surface is larger than a proportion of O to the composition ratio of N, O and Al in the second surface.

12. (New) The substrate according to claim 11, wherein a cap layer made of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  is provided as the uppermost layer of the substrate for growth of nitride semiconductor.